FAMILY LIFE

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CAN COLLEGES HELP REDUCE DIVORCE?

By LYNN T. WHITE, Jr.
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Our immediate cultural roots lie not in antiquity, but in the Middle Ages. A unique feature of our culture is that during its formative period its custodians were a celibate male clergy. Our colleges and universities are directly descended from the medieval universities designed to train this celibate male clergy. As a result, the family has never enjoyed the educational emphasis and social prestige which, for example, it has had in China where the celibate Buddhist clergy never managed to subvert the family-centered Confucian ethic.

The older feminist movement assumed that a woman's mind was not only equal to, but identical with a man's. The higher education of women in America is still based on the assumption that its goal is to make them as much like men as possible. I know of no supposedly "coeducational" institution in America in which coeducation is not essentially a fraud as far as women are concerned. One of the consequences is that the divorce rate of college graduate women is three times as high as that of college graduate men.

But a new position is beginning to make its way which will, I trust, profoundly change the attitudes and practices of American education during the coming generation and which should help reduce the divorce rate. Men and women are remarkably like each other, and remarkably unlike each other. Men generally have stressed the differences; the feminists have emphasized the identities. Surely the only firm foundation for the modern family is equality of the sexes, and if we are to achieve a true equality between men and women, it must be an equality of differences as well as equality of identities. We must agree that "Women are people" but insist on the supplementary truth that "People are either women or men."

What, if anything, should the college do for its women students in direct relation to the problems of handling family relations successfully? Here we have perhaps fallen down on the job worse than anywhere else. Courses on The Family are not given at all in some colleges; in others they are slipped in only on a semi-bootleg, non-credit basis. Even our

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departments of home economics almost universally disregard the home. They are pitched at the level of professional training, and at times deliberately discourage the non-professional, that is, the girl who just wants to cook for her family and not run the kitchens of an insane asylum, from taking their courses.

Such situations are chiefly due to the fact that the leaders of American women, in their fight for freedom, made the disastrous mistake of assuming that the measure of human accomplishment was the measure of masculine accomplishment. The result has been to develop and encourage in millions of women a sense of frustration, of failure, a loss of self-respect, a low valuation of their own biological functions and of the family, which has had deeply disturbing effects on the life of our nation. This psychosis is the chief cause of the continually increasing unhappiness within families, of which the growing divorce rate is merely a symptom. As I have tried to indicate, its roots lie deep in history, and will not be eradicated easily or quickly.

The problem of divorce is essentially an aspect of the inferior status of women not merely in our society but in our culture. The divorce problem will not be licked as a major social phenomenon until we achieve true equality of the sexes. We shall not have true equality until women, and those who educate women, shake off their subservience to masculine points of view.

We shall continue to have a high rate of divorce until we can create a civilization in which women are as glad to be women as men are to be men.

(Abstracts from an address by Dr. White at the AIFR conference on "What can we do about divorce?", Ambassador Hotel, Los Angeles, May 9, 1947.)

FAMILY COURTS

Interest now being shown in many states, in the establishment or improvement of special Courts of Domestic Relations, suggests that much might be done in this way to strengthen family life. Observation of successful and unsuccessful experiments indicates that some of the important points to be considered are the following:

1. Much depends on the personality of the judge who presides over such a court. He must be broad enough in his outlook to avoid legalism, to follow equity proceedings as far as possible, and to prevent too much publicity.

2. He must have skilled help, preferably under civil service. Little is to be expected if the appointment of counselors is to pay political debts.

3. The counseling service of such a court should be available to the whole public, and not merely to litigants who have already employed lawyers and filed suits. The purpose, in short, should be to enable people to keep out of court.

THE HANDICAP OF BEING A TWIN

One child in every 42 is a twin. If greatness were distributed at random, one out of every 42 of the great men and women of history would have been a twin. Actually, it is doubtful whether any of the world's greatest has been a twin. Twins may become eminent and admirable persons, but there seems to be something that keeps any twin from getting into the ranks of genius.

Why this should be true is an unsolved problem. Twins are somewhat handicapped at birth, being smaller and lighter than the average new-born baby. They have a higher rate of infant mortality than singletons. But if they survive they seem to make up the physical deficiency and go on to lead normal lives.

Is it possible that this inferiority at the start of life is sufficient to prevent the fullest development of their inheritance? Or is the limitation on their attainments, which seems to exist, merely the outcome of the way they are treated? Further researches are needed. Dorothy T. Burlingham of London has made a small contribution in the second annual volume (1945) of The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child (Pp. 424, price $7.50 from International Universities Press, 227 W. 13th st., New York 11, N. Y., 1947).

Some mothers welcome twins, she points out; others feel humiliated to have produced them. The latter attitude might easily affect the child's development.

"Identical twins when they grow up often fail to develop into two separate human entities." This would naturally interfere with the growth of the ego. Especially if dressed and treated alike, they may come to feel that the most important thing about them is not individuality but twinship.

Three-fourths of all twins are non-identical, however, and this limitation would hardly apply to them in equal degree, especially if one is a boy and the other a girl. But it might help if parents would make it a point to bring up twins as individuals instead of half-individuals. The experiment would at least be worth trying.

Others of the 22 papers in this Yearbook are of interest mainly to professional psychoalysts.

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"MEET YOUR FAMILY"

At Bryn Mawr church the whole effort of the church during the month of May was devoted to the promotion of successful family life. A brochure prepared by Dr. Sylvanus M. Duvall, and outlining the program, is available by addressing Bryn Mawr Community Church, 7000 Jefery st., Chicago 49, Ill.

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SYMPOSIA

WOMEN'S OPPORTUNITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, May, 1947 issue of the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Pp. 224, price $2 from the Academy, 3457 Walnut st., Philadelphia 4, Pa. —Papers by 23 authorities.

LEFT-HANDEDNESS

Lower animals show little regular preference for using one side of the body rather than the other. Tools left by our ancestors of the Stone Age suggest that left-handed men and women were as common as right handers. But during the Bronze Age there was apparently a marked increase in right-handedness, as judged by implements that have come down to us. For example, most sickles were made exclusively for right-hand use. Among primitive peoples at the present time, left-handedness seems to be much commoner than among civilized peoples. In the United States, something like 6% of all boys and 3% of all girls use the left hand by preference. But hand, foot, and eye do not always go together.

Why are most civilized people right-handed? And why, in modern civilization, do some people start left-handed and find it almost impossible to change over? Left-handedness has generally been supposed to be inborn, probably inherited, although the manner of inheritance is irregular. The whole subject has been restudied by Dr. Abram Blau, a New York psychiatrist, in "The Master Hand" (Pp. 206, price $4.50 from the American Orthopsychiatric Assn., Lawson G. Lowrey, editor, 25 W. 54th st., New York 19, N. Y., 1946.)

Dr. Blau holds that there is no inherited tendency whatever for left-handedness but that, as culture advances, specialization becomes convenient and the right hand is chosen for a variety of reasons. Once this becomes "a cultural law, gradually incorporated into the social code", an extensive machinery comes into play to make it prevail and the right hand eventually stands for all that is good, the left for all that is bad.

Children, then, are right-handed simply because they are trained from birth to use the right hand. But what about the left-handers? What happened to them? They are merely obstinate and contrary, the author thinks. In other words, sinistrality is a manifestation of "an attitude of opposition or negativism along with such other signs as disobedience, refusal to eat, temper tantrums, rebelliousness, etc."

Dr. Blau explains the fact that left-handedness is twice as common among boys as among girls by pointing out that boys are more likely to be aggressive and stubborn. Left-handedness is more frequent among delinquents and criminals for similar reasons,—They too are rebellious and negativistic, refusing to conform to society's expectations.

Many stutterers are left-handed or have been changed from that to right-handedness and the prevalent theory is that such a forced change causes confusion in the brain which lends to speech defect, squinting, and difficulties in reading. Dr. Blau does not agree. The same neurotic tendencies that cause these difficulties also cause the child to refuse to use the hand that other people use, he explains.

In our civilization, he believes all children should be taught to use the right hand, even if they seem to start with a preference for the left. "The alleged dangers of retraining are non-existent." But if the child seems

to be deeply fixed in his preference for the left hand, and develops anxieties concerning such retraining, he admits that it is better not to insist.

Most biologists will probably feel that Dr. Blau has leaned too far backward in denying the inborn nature of left-handedness and that it is better to proceed carefully in over-riding the tendency. The fact that war veterans who lost an arm can be retrained to use the other hand without mental confusion does not necessarily prove that the same thing can be done with a child whose brain centers are not yet thoroughly established.

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EDUCATIONAL NOTES

Heredity is the title of a new scientific journal published by Oliver & Boyd of London and Edinburgh.

Fifty courses will be given in the traveling summer school on Marriage and the Family, offered by Jesuits for the seventeenth time this year. Director is Dr. Daniel A. Lord of St. Louis.

More than 3,500,000 rural homemakers belong to organized groups led by more than 500,000 volunteers and more than 3,000 home demonstration agents. Typical of the emphasis is the slogan of the Home Bureau Federation in Illinois: "The home is the center of every woman's interest, but not the circumference."

More than 150 popular - priced pamphlets are listed in the 1947 Pamphlet List, free from The Association for Family Living, 209 S. State st., Chicago 4, Ill.

Dr. David R. Mace, secretary of the Marriage Guidance Council (London) has written a preface for the English edition of Paul Popenoe's "Marriage before and after".

Issued originally for Roman Catholics, the Marriage-Preparation Service published by the Catholic Centre of the University of Ottawa (125 Wilbrod st., Ottawa, Canada) is now offered to those who are not members of the church. The latter must still have written permission of a priest, in order to follow the $5 course, but others may take it without restrictions and the examination questions have also been segregated so that non-Catholics will not reply to any of the questions that are concerned primarily with ecclesiastical doctrine.

Variety magazine has awarded its 1946 "Radio Showmanagement" plaque to station WEEI, Boston, for "expanding radio's social usefulness". This resulted largely from the station's series of nine programs dealing with the sex problems of adolescents and young people. "Carefully prepared and seriously undertaken", Variety noted, "WEEI's Sex Guidance for Youth broke through radio's self-imposed inhibitions and proved that even the most conservative audiences are ready for intelligent, open discussion of delicate social subjects." Scripts of the series (which was presented in collaboration with the Massachusetts Society for Social Hygiene) are available on request to the station in Boston.

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Nearly 300 persons were given training in the techniques of counseling last year, by the Institute through its seminars and correspondence course.

NEW BOOKS IN BRIEF REVIEW

UNITS IN PERSONAL HEALTH AND HUMAN RELATIONS, by Lillian L. Biester, William Griffiths, and N. O. Pearce. Pp. 267, price $3.50 from the University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1947.

In order to provide the public schools with materials necessary for education in marriage and family life, the educational services of the Minnesota Department of Health put out a large mimeographed volume (reviewed in this bulletin, March, 1946) which was tried out in a number of schools and also studied critically by many interested persons. It is now made available to the general public in revised form, and constitutes one of most valuable contributions yet made to the subject. Sex education is carried in its pages from the kindergarten through the senior high school and junior college; heredity, reproduction, growth and development are discussed, and the problems of selecting a mate, marrying wisely, remaining married successfully, and establishing a family, are taken up in detail, with suggested student activities, questions for discussion (with answers!), tests, and methods of evaluation. The units are so well organized that teachers with good personality and background can easily use them without prolonged special training. The book ought to find immediate use in every school system that pretends to educate its pupils for life.

PARENT EDUCATION, a study in family relationships, by Harvey Scott. Pp. 192, price $1 (paper bound) from The Christian Helper, Box 1075, Texarkana, Texas, 1947.

Well-organized units for a class of parents or young people planning to marry. The author is minister of the Walnut Street Church of Christ, Texarkana.

ABC OF DIVORCE, by Jacques Bacal and Louise Sloane. Pp. 128, price $2 from E. P. Dutton & Co., 300 Fourth ave., New York 10, N. Y., 1947.

The currently high divorce rate has brought out a large crop of "guide books", mainly by lawyers. Mr. Bacal is in this class, while his collaborator is a professional writer. The book lives up to its title. Half of it is given to an analysis of the requirements of the various states. There is no index.

MARRIAGES ARE NOT MADE IN HEAVEN, by Janet Fowler Nelson in collaboration with Margaret Hiller. Pp. 158, price $1.75 from the Woman's Press, 600 Lexington ave., New York 22, N. Y., 1947.

This is presented as a revised edition of a book which appeared in 1939, but the revision apparently consisted mainly of changing the date, since no references are included later than 1938. It was intended primarily as a handbook for leaders of discussion groups, and contains many suggested questions which may not satisfy the casual reader who is looking for information instead of questions. But there is information too, on such topics as authority in the home, leisure-time interests, budgets, and sex adjustments.

KNOW YOURSELF: an aid to better living, by David A. Stewart. Pp.

161, price $1.50 from McClelland & Stewart, 215 Victoria st., Toronto 1, Ont., Canada, 1946.

A simple and practical discussion of every-day psychology by a professor in the University of New Brunswick. "Neurosis is simply the result of a mental struggle that reaches no climax or decision", he points out. We are not all neurotic but we have tendencies in that direction which we have to correct by proper mental hygiene. His suggestions are directly applicable to marriage.

THE MARRIAGE READER, edited by Samuel G. Kling and Esther B. Kling. Pp. 488, price $3 from The Vanguard Press, 424 Madison ave., New York 17, N. Y., 1947.

Three dozen selections from standard authors, covering the subtitle, "A guide to sex satisfaction and happiness in marriage." Some of the selections are outdated and it is doubtful whether Benjamin Franklin and Honore de Balzac meet the needs of modern education as well as writers who based their conclusions on the large amount of recent scientific work in this field; but on the whole the material is well selected and presents abundant detailed guidance for those who want to make their marriages successful.

ELEMENTS OF GENETICS, by Edward C. Colin. 2d edition, Pp. 402, price $3.50 from the Blakiston Co., 1012 Walnut st., Philadelphia 5, Pa., 1946.

This text book, by a professor at the Chicago Teachers College, appeared in 1941, and has now been brought up to date. It devotes particular attention to human heredity, in contrast with most introductory texts in genetics, and is richly illustrated. A final chapter discusses methods of improving the human species, because "man has it within his power to determine to a large extent his own biological future." This demands a goal, and Dr. Colin thinks most people would agree as to the desirability of improvement in health (including beauty), intelligence, and variability (i.e., it would be undesirable to have people all alike). As to racial differences, "it seems clear that the points of likeness among races far outnumber and outweigh their points of difference. The greatest progress for mankind as a whole, therefore, would seem at present to consist in raising the level of health, energy, and intelligence within each race, rather than the forcible supplanting of one race by another." Methods of improving mankind may be restrictive (negative eugenics), such as marriage laws, segregation, and sterilization, or positive. Among the latter, which "may well have the effect of increasing the frequency of desirable traits", the author lists the regulation of immigration, the subsidizing of superior individuals so that they may have larger families, education, promotion of genetic research, and the improvement of environmental conditions. "Many generations will probably be necessary to bring about a notable change in man. The slowness of the process, however, need not discourage us if we recall that man most certainly is near the beginning of his history. Before him lies a future too vast for the mind to comprehend. Barring cos-

mic accidents, there is apparent no good reason why man may not anticipate a billion years of life on earth."

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INEXPENSIVE PAMPHLETS

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY, by Charles A. Ellwood, free from General Board of Lay Activities, 740 Rush st., Chicago 11, Ill.

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY, Pp. 40, price 5c from The Catholic Centre of the University of Ottawa, 125 Wilbrod st., Ottawa, Canada.

YOUR FIRST WEEK TOGETHER, a plan for devotions at the beginning of marriage, by George William Brown and Ruth McAfee Brown, Pp. 8, price 5 cts. from Division of Christian Education, Congregational Christian Churches, 14 Beacon st., Boston 8, Mass.

FAMILY FUN, 8-page folder, price 5 cts. from Board of Education, The Methodist Church, 810 Broadway, Nashville 2, Tenn.

PARENTS: FIRST TEACHERS OF RELIGION, 6-page folder, price 3 cts. from The International Council of Religious Education, 203 N. Wabash ave., Chicago 1, Ill.

HAPPINESS IN OLD AGE, by George Lawton, price 10 cts. from the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, 1790 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.

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RESEARCH NOTES

Mothers in their late forties are four times as likely to give birth to an epileptic child as are those in their twenties, according to a survey by G. Beall and R. G. Stanton (Human Biology, Jan., 1946.)

From a study of more than 200,000 births, Ed Jenny, a Swiss biologist, reports that boys are more often born in the morning or afternoon, girls toward midday or midnight.

University students in Australia worry oftener concerning sex than any other one topic, says A. H. Martin of the University of Sydney. Other topics, in order of descending importance, are inferiority, physical symptoms, schizoid trends, religious difficulties, fear and anger.

Persons who have "traits which form part of the background of mental disease" are more likely than the average to marry each other, says L. S. Penrose, corroborating a study published by Karl Pearson a generation ago.

Four married men out of every five help with the housework, according to a Gallup Poll in Great Britain. They were slightly more optimistic on this point than were their wives, since only 69% of married women said their husbands helped around the house. As to the extent of their help, 49% said "all the time." Fires were tended regularly by 55%, dishwashing was undertaken by 53%, regular housecleaning by 28%. Strangely enough, only 19% said that they helped with taking care of the children. Cooking was done by 17%.

Planned parenthood clinics in the United States were visited last year by 175,000 women.

Questioning 1204 students at Brigham Young University (Provo, Utah), Harold T. Christensen found that the young people desired an average of four children or more, with a preference for males, and that the majority favored birth control in marriage.

Women were less likely to favor birth control than did the men; on the other hand, more women than men wanted to be childless. (Utah Academy of Sciences, May 4, 1946.)

Total money income per family in the U. S. in 1944 was $2,209 (median), according to calculations by the federal census. The median for urban families was $2,480, for rural nonfarm $2,145, and for rural farm $1,167.

Three out of every four parents approve of spanking children, fathers and mothers voting about alike on the question put to them by a Gallup Poll. But among parents who were themselves not spanked in childhood, only 38% approve of the practice. In Great Britain the Ministry of Education has asked the Foundation for Educational Research to investigate the subject of corporal punishment in schools.

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AROUND THE WORLD

"Inviolability of the home" is one of the fundamental civil rights which the Constituent Diet of Poland has designated in a sort of Bill of Rights. "Protection of family life and care of mother and child" is another.

Hungary has taken steps to minimize the handicaps of illegitimacy. If the mother can not identify the father of her child, the state will name one of her close male relatives as a legal father and the child will bear his name.

In Australia a bureau of conciliation set up by the Church of England to deal with unhappy marriage and prevent divorces, claims 100% success during the first year, in which it dealt with several hundred couples.

Brussels, Belgium, has been chosen for the International Congress on "Present-day aspects of the regulation of prostitution". This is conducted by the International Abolitionist Federation, 37 Quai Wilson, Geneva, Switzerland.

Human heredity will be emphasized at the Eighth International Congress of Genetics, to be held in Stockholm, Sweden, July 7-14, 1948.

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DULLNESS SPREADS

Average level of intelligence in Great Britain is declining at the rate of 1½ to 2 points on the IQ scale in each generation, says Sir Cyril Burt, professor of psychology at University College, London, after reviewing many recent studies on the subject. (Similar results have been found in the U. S.) The drop is due to the fact that intelligent families have fewer children than do dull and feebleminded parents. If present conditions continue to the end of the present century, Sir Cyril concludes, the result will be that the number of children of "scholarship" ability, i.e., above 130 IQ, will be halved and the number of feebleminded (below 70 IQ) will be doubled. Such a result can be avoided, only by increase in the number of children born in superior families or a decrease in the number born in inferior families (or both). He reviews the subject fully in pamphlet, "Intelligence and Fertility", Pp. 43, price 2 s., from The Eugenics Society, 69 Eccleston Square, London 1, England, 1946.

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF FAMILY RELATIONS

The American Institute of Family Relations is the first organized attempt in the United States to bring all the resources of modern science to bear on the promotion of successful marriage. It was incorporated in 1930 as a non-profit undertaking, and all its services are available to the public at a minimum cost.

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